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# Labor Market Digest, January 2009

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

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# MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Center for Workforce  
Research and Information

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Adjusted statewide unemployment rate increased to 7.8 percent in January .page 4

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A publication of  
the

**MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
Center for Workforce  
Research and Information

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*The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are provided upon request to individuals with disabilities.*

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# LABOR MARKET DIGEST

January Data

March 2009

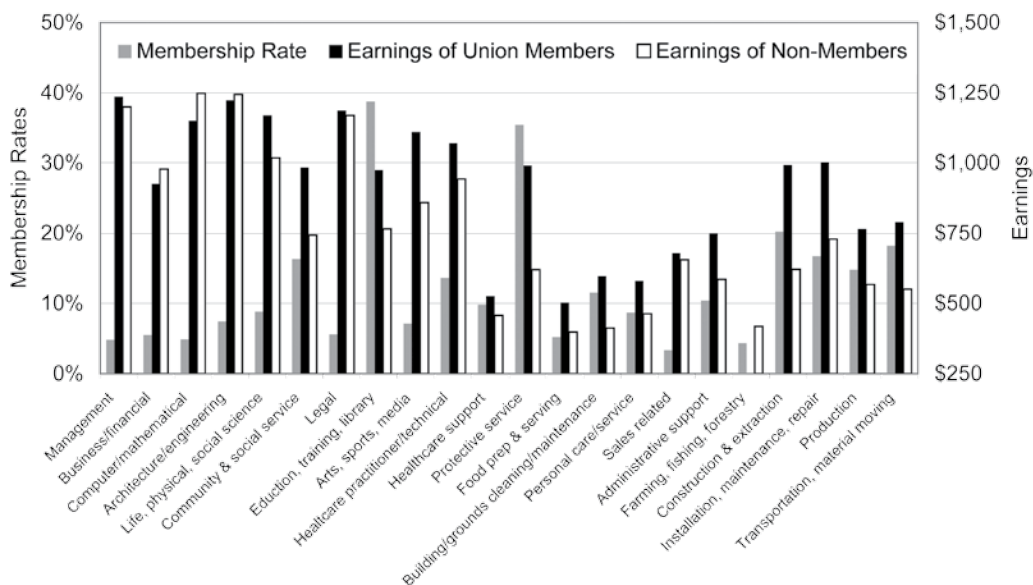
## Union Membership in 2008

Union members accounted for 12.3 percent of employed wage and salary workers in Maine in 2008, up from 11.7 percent in 2007 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationally, union membership was 12.4 in 2008, up from 12.1 percent. Union membership totaled 71,000 in Maine and 16.1 million in the U.S. Since 1983 the union membership has declined from 20.1 percent in the U.S. Data on union membership is collected through the Current Population Survey, a monthly survey of 60,000 households that obtains information on employment and unemployment. The following detail is based on 2008 national data; detail for states is not published.

### Membership by Industry, Occupation, and Earnings

The union membership rate for public sector workers was nearly five times that of private sector workers (36.8 percent compared to 7.6 percent). In the public sector, local government workers had the highest union membership rate at 42.2 percent. Local governments generally have high concentrations of workers in heavily unionized occupations, including teachers, police officers, and fire fighters. Private sector industries with high unionization rates include transportation and utilities (22.2 percent), telecommunications (19.3 percent), and construction (15.6 percent). Unionization rates were relatively low in financial activities (1.8 percent) and professional and business services (2.1 percent).

Union membership rates and earnings of members and non-members by occupational group



cont. on page 8

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Among occupational groups, education, training, and library occupations (38.7 percent) and protective service occupations (35.4 percent) had the highest unionization rates. Sales related occupations (3.3 percent) and farming, fishing, and forestry occupations (4.3 percent) had the lowest unionization rates.

Among full-time wage and salary workers, union members had median usual weekly earnings of \$886, while those who were not represented by unions had median weekly earnings of \$691. The difference reflects a variety of influences in addition to coverage by collective bargaining agreements, including variations in the distributions of union membership by occupation, industry, firm size, or geographic region. Membership rates were generally lowest in occupations with higher than average earnings that generally require post-secondary education or training, and earnings differentials between members and non-members were generally lower in those occupations.

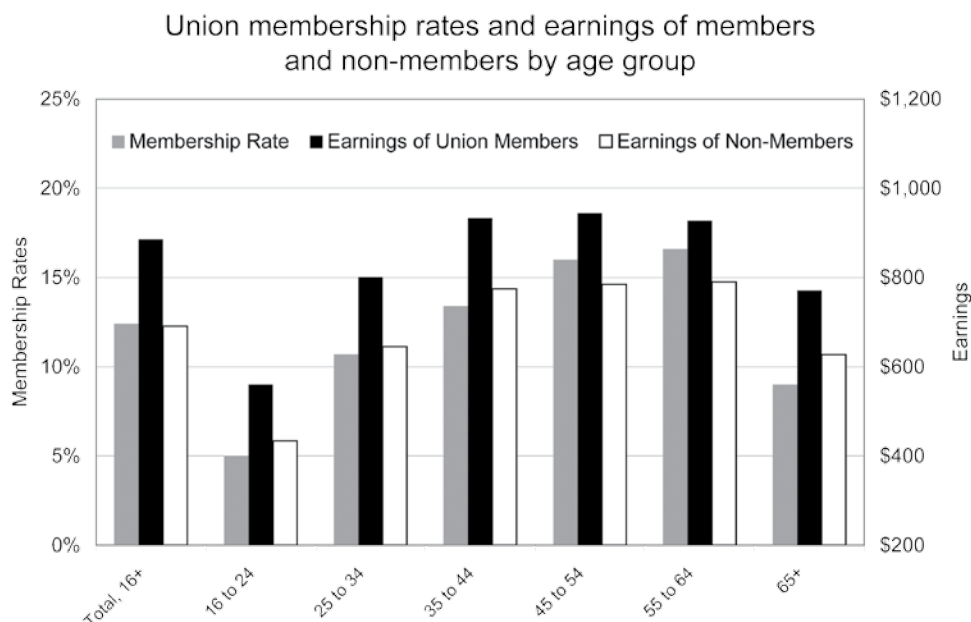
### Demographic and Regional Characteristics of Union Membership

Union membership rates were highest among workers age 55 to 64 (16.6 percent) and 45 to 54 (16.0 percent), and lowest among those 16 to 24 (5.0 percent). Membership rates of full-time workers were twice that of part-time workers (13.7 percent compared to 6.7 percent).

Union membership was higher for men (13.4 percent) than women (11.4 percent), though the gap in membership has narrowed considerably since 1983 when there was a 10 percentage point differential. Between 1983 and 2008 the union membership rate declined 11.3 points among men and 3.2 points among women.

The highest rates of union membership were in the Pacific, industrial mid-west, and mid-Atlantic regions, and lowest in the South, Plains, and Rocky Mountain regions.

More detail is available at [www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf)



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